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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 4705

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG PFOR MNUC BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY

REF: BRUSSELS 4683

THE TEXT OF THE MINISTRY'S NOTE, DATED MAY 6, DELIVERED MAY 9, AND SUMMARIZED IN REFTEL, IS AS FOLLOWS, IN INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION (FRENCH ORIGINAL BEING POUCHED):

BEGIN TEXT. (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) THE MINISTRY STATES HEREWITH BELGIUM'S REACTION TO THE DECLARATION MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER CONCERNING PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY AS RELATED TO CONCERNS ABOUT NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

1. BELGIUM ENTIRELY SHARES THE DESIRE EXPRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO AVOID PROLIFERATION OF THE NUMBER OF STATES HOLDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. CONSISTENT WITH THIS IDEA, BELGIUM HAS SUBSCRIBED TO THE TREATY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND HAS SPARED NO EFFORT TO BRING THE LARGEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF STATES TO ADHERE TO THIS TREATY.

2. IN ADDITION, BELGIUM HAS PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE WORK OF
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THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY SINCE ITS ORIGIN, AND WAS DELIGHTED WITH EVERY ACTION TO STRENGTHEN THIS AGENCY AND TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONTROLS THAT THIS BODY IS CALLED UPON TO EXERCISE TO AVOID PROLIFERATION OF THE NUMBER OF STATES HOLDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. BELGIUM THUS IS DISPOSED TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN ANY CONVERSATION OR NEGOTIATION INITIATED IN THE AREAS CITED IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT.

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3. IN DOING SO NONETHELESS BELGIUM WISHES TO SUMMARIZE ITS APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM:

A. ACCOUNT SHOULD BE TAKEN OF THE FACT THAT THE ENERGY SITUATION OF THE U.S. DIFFERS RADICALLY IN SOME RESPECTS FROM THAT OF OTHER COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING BELGIUM, WHICH DO NOT HAVE ACCESS ON THEIR OWN TERRITORY TO ANY PETROLEUM, NATURAL GAS, OR URANIUM RESOURCES, AND HAVE VERY LITTLE ECONOMICALLY EXPLOITABLE COAL. IF THEY ARE NOT TO ADD UNDULY TO BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND OTHER ECONOMIC INDEBTEDNESS, SUCH COUNTRIES SEE THEMSELVES AS THUS CONSTRAINED TO MEET THEIR ENERGY NEEDS BY RECOURSE TO ALL PHASES OF THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE, INCLUDING THE REPROCESSING AND RECYCLING OF PLUTONIUM IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS AND IN BREEDERS.

B. GIVEN THE ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS, BELGIUM CONSIDERS THAT THE INTERNAL POLICY DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE OF A NATURE TO HINDER BELGIUM'S ENERGY SUPPLIES OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ELECTRICAL IN-STALLATIONS FOR NATIONAL NEEDS; STILL LESS TO NULLIFY THE ALREADY EXISTING FACILITIES ON ITS TERRITORY IN THE FIELDS OF REPROCESSING AND FABRICATION OF PLUTONIUM FUEL.

C. FURTHERMORE, BELGIUM CONSIDERS ITSELF ABLE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES NOT TO INCREASE THE RISK OF PROLIFERATION, WHILE CONTINUING TO KEEP FACILITIES FUNCTIONING THAT HAVE EXISTED ON ITS TERRITORY FOR MANY YEARS, FACILITIES THAT AMOUNT TO AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SYSTEM IN PLACE. BELGIUM IS DISPOSED
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MOREOVER TO TAKE THE MEASURES RECOMMENDED IN THE CLUB OF LONDON TO AVOID EXPORTS OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF PLUTONIUM FUEL OR OF FACILITIES PERMITTING THE PRODUCTION OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES.

D. WITHIN THE EEC, BELGIUM INTENDS TO REMAIN FIRMLY ATTACHED TO THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE CIRCULATION OF NUCLEAR GOODS AND EQUIPMENT UNDER CONTROLS FORESEEN IN THE TREATY OF ROME AND VERIFIED BY THE IAEA.

E. BELGIUM SUPPOSES THAT THE UNITED STATES CAN ASSURE THAT THE CONDITIONS BELGIUM CONSIDERS NECESSARY FOR ITS OWN ENERGY SUPPLY ARE NOT OF A NATURE TO INTERFERE WITH TRANSACTIONS TO ACQUIRE ENRICHED URANIUM NEEDED FOR THE OPERATION OF REACTORS INSTALLED ON BELGIAN TERRITORY, AS WELL AS FOR SUPPLY OF NATURAL URANIUM THAT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ASSURE, THROUGH BELGIUM'S PARTICIPATION IN ENRICHMENT FACILITIES WITHIN THE EEC, THE LATER SUPPLY OF THESE REACTORS AND PARTICIPATION IN JOINT PROJECTS WITHIN THE COM-MUNITY.

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4. FINALLY, BELGIUM WISHES TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF AMERICAN AUTHORITIES TO ITS ACUTE CONCERN TOUCHING ON THE CONSEQUENCES FOR SURVIVAL OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY, WHICH COULD BE SET IN MOTION INTERNATIONALLY BY THE POLICY ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, A POLICY THAT IN EFFECT CONTRADICTS THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE IV OF THE NPT. DURING THE NEGOTIATION OF THE NPT, ARTICLE IV WAS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE INDISPENSABLE COUNTER-PARTS FOR THE COMMITMENT TO ARTICLE II MADE BY THOSE STATES ADHERING TO THE NPT AND NOT ENDOWED WITH NUCLEAR ARMS.

(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE). RENNER

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